

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

*A Treatise on the Esculent Funguses of England.* By C. D. BADHAM, M.D. 8vo. Reeve, Brothers, 1847.

THIS is the work of a person of considerable tact and powers of observation, and has the singular merit of containing much that is new and interesting on a subject which has been treated again and again by persons of as various merit as the books they have published. The prospectus was peculiarly well drawn up, and was calculated to make a very favourable impression. The work itself forms a handsome octavo volume; the illustrations are for the most part admirable, and faithfully represent the species with which they profess to make the unlearned reader familiar, and the culinary "*indications*" such as will satisfy the most fastidious.

Dr. Badham does not pretend to be a learned mycologist, but during a long residence abroad he had collected a mass of information on the subject, to which much has been added since his return, and which he has laid before the public with that ability for which he was remarkable during his earlier course, and which he has displayed in his publication on Insect Life. It would be easy indeed to point out minor errors which a more familiar acquaintance with the works of some of the leading mycologists of the day would have enabled him to avoid, but these are of little importance, and do not at all detract from the general merit of the work, which is professedly of a popular character, its very aim being the diffusion of useful knowledge on a subject too much neglected in this country.

The mode of cultivation of the common mushroom is familiar to almost every one, though it is not carried in this country to an extent at all proportionate to that which prevails in Paris, where the markets are entirely supplied with mushrooms obtained artificially, millions being produced weekly in the catacombs. In Italy several species are obtained by the most simple processes. At Naples an Agaric is abundantly produced from spent coffee grounds simply by depositing the marc in cellars of a proper temperature. A Polyporus is raised from stony masses impregnated with mycelium by transferring them to the garden with a portion of the original mould and watering them daily. Specimens were some years ago raised by Messrs. Lee of Hammersmith in this way which are preserved in the British Museum. Two other fungi are produced in a very simple manner which we do not recollect to have seen noticed before. Dr. Badham shall however speak for himself.

"A third fungus which we have the means of producing *ad libitum* is that which sprouts from the pollard head of the black poplar; these heads it is usual to remove at the latter end of autumn as soon as the vintage is over and their marriage with the vine is annulled; hundreds of such heads are then cut and transported to different parts; they are abundantly watered during the first month, and in a short time produce that truly delicious fungus *Agaricus caudicinus*, the *Pioppini*, which during the autumn of the year make the greatest

show in many of the Italian market-places. These pollard blocks continue to bear from twelve to fourteen years; I saw a row of them in the Botanical Garden at Naples which after this period were still productive, though less frequently and of fewer Agarics at a crop. The practice of rearing funguses from the poplar is not modern: Dioscorides knew, for he tells us, that if we bark the white or black poplar, cutting the bark into pieces and covering it with horse-dung, an excellent kind of fungus will spring up and continue to bear throughout the year. By way of comment to which passage, Matthiolus adds, that a little leaven will produce an abundant crop in four days. Another fungus which I have myself reared (*Polyporus avellanus*) is to be procured by singeing over a handful of straw a block of the cobnut tree which is then to be watered and put by. In about a month the funguses make their appearance, which are quite white, of from two to three inches in diameter, and excellent to eat, while their profusion is sometimes so great as entirely to hide the wood from which they spring. All blocks of this nut wood do not bear. Professor Sanguinetti informs me that the peasants in the Abruzzi, who bring in these logs, know perfectly which will succeed and which will not; a knowledge, he adds, to which the closest attention during all the years that I have been employed by the Papal Government as superintendent of the fungus market has not enabled me to attain."

Many other passages of general interest will be found dispersed through the work, and those who look for especial information will not often be disappointed. The truffles alone, though one of the most interesting groups of fungi, whether regarded as objects of commerce or on account of their curious and multifarious structure, form an exception.

We cordially recommend this work in connexion with the larger one of Mrs. Hussey to the attentive notice of our readers. We do not indeed exactly understand why Dr. Badham's obligations to that lady are not more particularly noticed. Her name does not appear on the plates, though far the greater part of the figures are due to her pencil. Other obligations of a minor character from another quarter ought also we think to have been acknowledged, but we would rather suppose that in either case there has been some accidental omission.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

### LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREWS.

April 5, 1847.—Dr. Reid gave an account of observations on the development of the Medusa, and exhibited the animals to the Society.

He recalled to the attention of the Society the account which he gave of the structure and habits of the larvæ of the Medusæ on a former occasion. In the remarks already printed in the Society's 'Transactions,' it was stated by Dr. Reid, that he had kept these animals alive at home from September 1845 to the end of July 1846,